



NEWS

Juhu jive

What's presently little more than a sandy dumping ground could soon become the cultural forecourt of the city if architect PK Das gets his way.

For years Juhu Beach has been a hawker's haven, with stalls mushrooming along its entire length, blocking access and visibility of the beach. Now, following the blueprint of Das's ambitious Juhu Beach Redevelopment Plan, the 3.5-kilometre-long seafront strip is set to be smartened up by adding two car parks with a total capacity of over 600 cars, a food court, six recreational parks for children and senior citizens, a smattering of open art plazas and galleries and an amphitheatre, plus sundry other conveniences.

"But by no means is it an anti-hawkers or anti-slum dwellers plan," Das is quick to point out. "The hawkers will be relocated a mere 50 metres away along the beach in a planned food court with proper water, sewage connections and seating space." Two beach-side slums – Patelwadi and Moragaon – will be provided with toilets and water facilities so that slum dwellers do not use the beach to relieve themselves. Das clarifies: "The idea is to contain [the slums] and ensure that they do not expand onto the beach."

But it has been an arduous journey for the architect and the various residents associations that support the project. Petitions against by the hawkers' association as well as obstructive bureaucracy have meant fighting the case for redevelopment right up to the Supreme Court. A monitoring authority has now been set up under the orders of the Bombay High Court to oversee the timely implementation of the project.

The Juhu Citizens Welfare Group, one of the petitioners to the court, is responsible for maintaining the beach. "It is essential that public spaces remain within the collective control of the citizens, if we are to break the nexus between politicians and other vested interests. Otherwise, all our open spaces will get eaten up," says Vish Mada, president of the group.

Mada's views are supported by Shabana Azmi, who, along with

Hema Malini, has released almost Rs 3 crore for the project from the MP's Discretionary Fund. Says Azmi, "Public spaces are the lungs of the city and the only way to protect them is through the vigilance of citizens groups." To establish her point she cites the success of the Bandra Bandstand and Carter Road promenade makeovers (both executed by Das). Juhu citizens have learnt their lesson on public activism well. "We have a committee of senior citizens who keep a guard on the beach to report back on any encroachments or lack of cleanliness. If need be, we will go back to the courts to protect our beach," vows Mada.

Both the Bandra projects and the Juhu Redevelopment Plan are part of a master plan to restore and protect the entire western waterfront of the city, says Das: The next beach on his agenda is Dadar Chowpatty. *Chetna Mahadik*



What's that about?

Q There are some serious-looking signboards around town bearing the names of medical practitioners followed by the word BUMS. Are these guys really so worthless?

A These are people who slog it out for four-and-half long years of study and one year of internship for the privilege of calling themselves BUMS. They're not members of a surfing fraternity but respectable members of the city's medical brotherhood, Bachelors of Unani Medicine and Surgery, proudly shortened to BUMS. You'll find scores of them practising around Kurla, Bhiwandi and Byculla. Most of them are graduates of the Dr MI Jamkhanawala Tibbia Unani Medical College at Juhu, the only such college in Mumbai, which turns out approximately 25 to 30 accredited BUMS each year.

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The science of unani is based on the humoral theory put forward by Hippocrates, which presupposes the presence of four humors – blood, phlegm, and black and yellow bile. If you are having sexual problems, BUMS are the way to go. Practitioners are reputedly able to cure falling sperm counts in men and infertility in women. They're said to have had fantastic results with some other ailments as well such as digestive problems and arthritis. Says Dr Noor Patel Medical Officer at the Tibbia College, "The humorous aspect of the acronym has crossed my mind, but I've never heard any untoward remark or comment being made on it." *Chetna Mahadik*